(c) if so, what steps will be taken by South Central Railways to meet this demand; and

(d) by when Ratnachal Express will have more bogies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) An analysis of the utilisation figures of Train No. 2717/2718 Vijayawada-Visakhapatnam Ratnachal Express has revealed that the sitting capacity in both 2nd & Air Conditioned (AC) classes in adequate to meet the present level of traffic demand.

Fire-Proof Coaches

1130. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRIMATI N.P.DURGA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Railways has introduced fire proof coaches;

(b) if so, the trains where they are being/will be provided; and

(c) the target for making all the coaches fire-proof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) All coaches make use of material which are fire retardant to the extent feasible. One prototype General Second Class Coach has been manufactured in Rail Coach Factory (RCF) and three coaches have been manufactured by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) by using improved fire retardant material as a trial measure. These coaches are under service trial. Based on the feedback from Railways and standardization of fire retardant material by Research, Design and Standards Organizations (RDSO), other coaches will be manufactured using latest fire retardant material.

Rail Tracks

†1131. SHRI ISAM SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rail tracks in our country are as per the specifications of modern latest engine manufactured; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if not, the action plan of Government to deal with it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Modern latest engines are expected to be deployed on certain selected sections only as per needs. However, even on such selected sections, the infrastructure *e.g.* Track, Bridges, Signals and Telecommunication etc., may need major upgradation, if full potential of these modern latest engines, is to be realized.

Such upgradation, is a costly activity and is normally planned and executed at a time when infrastructure replacement works are undertaken next. Such replacements are on age-cum-condition basis and their execution depends upon availability of funds. However, whenever such replacements are undertaken, modern infrastructure, as per route classification and annual traffic density etc. is adopted.

Till such time, required infrastructure is available, the rolling stocks, *e.g.* engines, wagons etc., including the modern latest engines, are allowed to be run at such maximum speeds and under such conditions, as are considered safe for the available infrastructure including track.

VIP Gate at New Delhi Railway Station

†1132. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the VIP Gate at Estate Entry Road at New Delhi Railway Station has been closed and locked;

(b) whether it is also a fact that VIPs are facing problems due to the closure of the gate; and

(c) if so, whether he will consider the matter of keeping the gate open for 24 hours to facilitate entry and exit of VIPs as well as the lebelled vehicles?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. VIP Gate remains open from 9.15 hours to 10.15 hours in the morning and 17.30 hours to 18.30 hours in the evening.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.